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ARGUS-CHAMPION

Need new leadership at the county level

To the Editor:

The Eagle Times of Wednesday, Oct. 3, carried an article by Aaron Aldridge regarding the Sullivan County budget deficit. Is it \$1.6 million or \$2.5 million? Who knows? Certainly the county manager, the commissioners and the delegation seem to be oblivious. This is just ridiculous! The budget last year was almost illegible and the auditor declared many parts were not in balance and unaccountable. So, everyone knew things were going to go south shortly.

Now, here we are almost a year later and the deficit bears sits on our shoulders. County Manager de Rubio states that the nursing home census was down and thus the income was down. Public Accountant Graham states that we ARE in a deficit of \$2.2 million and Mr. Barrette just states that he does not think it "...unreasonable to ask the taxpayers of Sullivan County to foot part of the bill for the nursing home..." Does anyone actually know what is going on? I think not.

So the nursing home census was down. That just did not happen this moment. The income for the home must have been dropping steadily as beds

went unfilled. So, why didn't Mr. de Rubio start cutting back? With less residents you need less service. That might have saved something. Mr. Graham states the deficit is \$2.2 million. Why are the other numbers even bandied around? He is the accountant. Finally, who pays any costs of the nursing home beyond the income? The taxpayers. We always pay, and pay, and pay.

As a citizen of Sullivan County and especially as a citizen of Sunapee I am outraged! Mistakes are made and we pay the cost of those mistakes and Sunapee pays 25 percent of the overall cost to begin with. Thus, we pay 25 percent of any other charge. The overrun or deficit, however you slice it or pay it off, will cost Sunapee \$550,000 more. Is there no accountability? Who bears the blame for shoddy budgeting and numbers that have not made sense for some time? We pay Manager de Rubio to run this ship and he has done a terrible job. So, how much of a raise is he going to get in next year's budget? Mr. de Rubio even wants to expand things with an upgraded nursing home, a new jail and, perhaps, a municipal recycling facility. Why? He does not seem to be able to run what he has now.

I say fire the manager and

hire a financial director to keep track of things and how they are spent. Let the commissioners earn their salary by taking care of day-to-day things and have the financial director report to the delegation so they can draw up a budget. We need to track income and expenses fairly and equitably so that we stop laying the burden back on the taxpayer.

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